

## Elementary Restructuring Committee

### School Visits

## Schools Visited

- Brighton Central School District
  - Suburban Rochester
  - Affluent community , 7% eligible for free and reduced lunch (2007-2008)
  - Enrollment, 1449 (K-5) they do not offer Pre-K . 2007-08 school year, (Olean 1238 Pre-K Through 5 as of 2/1/2011)
  - Current Configuration, 2 schools. K -2 & 3-5
  - Transition happened in the 1983/1984 school year

## Schools Visited

- Bradford Area High School
  - Just South of Olean
  - Similar demographics to Olean,
  - Enrollment for Elementary Schools , 1224 (Data based upon K-5, but school does have Pre-K)
  - Current Configuration, 2 schools, Pre K – 2, 3- 5
  - Completed transition in 2005

## Why?

- Brighton
  - Enrollment had been falling drastically.
  - They had four elementary schools with most having a lot of unused space
- Bradford
  - Had two different teaching philosophies
  - Perception of Rich and Poor Schools with issues flowing to Middle and High School creating division among children. Perception both by Parents and Teachers

## District Challenges

- Brighton
  - Had to close two schools and choose which ones to close
  - Moving teachers within the district, who gets what school?
  - Parent resistance during first several years (Budget voted down the year following transition)
- Bradford
  - Transportation was not discussed in enough detail and caused issues with parents
  - Teachers moving within district
  - Moving of all of the desks/books materials

## District Outcome

- Brighton
  - Since transition happened long ago, the configuration is the norm now not the exception
  - Closed two schools, as was mentioned earlier huge defeat of school budget
  - District was able to become more focused on grade specific challenges
- Bradford
  - More grade specific collaboration (more team building)
  - Eliminated the perception of rich school, poor school
  - Reduced the stress level associated with the move to middle school
  - \$100k in savings initially. Projected at \$300k, but it was not a sustained savings

## Student Impact

- Brighton
  - Had social workers, psychologists and guidance counselors engaged in identifying and working with families with special needs
  - Discussed the need to be proactive in training students in the transitions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
  - Lost the leadership piece offered by the older students
  - Were able to implement more age appropriate testing and tutors for this group
- Bradford
  - Students first to embrace the change
  - Had issues with transportation, not used to riding the bus
  - Student assessment not negatively impacted
  - Still had older kids doing buddy program initially with the older grades
  - Emphasized that the transition to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is a difficult one
  - Have a moving up day

## Parents Comments

- Brighton
  - Happy children weren't learning words older kids were learning
  - Perception of less bullying going on
  - School had implemented looping of teachers, some parents like, some parents did not (especially if they didn't get the teacher they wanted)
  - Many parents are involved in this community so sustaining a PTO was not an issue. Very involved group
- Bradford (no parent representative was at the meeting, although a couple of the people we met with were parents)
  - Transportation was an issue
  - "Why did you fix it if it wasn't broken"
  - Some parents serve on both PTO's. They alternate large fundraisers between schools
  - Had open houses prior to school to showcase to all the parents the buildings

## Teacher Impact

- Brighton
  - Who gets what classroom
  - Once a month meeting on instruction
- Bradford
  - Held a lottery to determine what teacher would get which classroom
  - THE MOVE, boxes need to be labeled extremely well
  - Fight perception of not being as good since they were from other schools
  - Morning TEAM meetings for team building within grade level
  - Coordination is key for the transition from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to align the needs of students to the appropriate class/teacher

## Other Topics

- Brighton
  - Performed a lot of research on developmental psychology.
  - Focused on the transition from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- Bradford
  - Has not raised taxes in 10 years?
  - Cost was not to be the determining factor
  - Working more as a district now as opposed to "Silo's"
  - Need to have everyone saying consistent message including greatest ambassadors, the teachers
  - Has a district funded Latch Key program before and after school.
  - Provided us with a list given by other districts that they had visited.